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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/ERA (NDEAN), EUR/RPM (HNICKERSON), AND
EUR/SE.

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SUBJECT: EU TAKES STEPS TO ADDRESS TURKEY'S ESDP CONCERNS

REF: BRUSSELS 02000 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: USEU Pol-Mil Chief Jeremy Brenner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The EU has proposed a series of nine steps designed to address Turkey's concerns over its role within the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The steps envisioned consist largely of broader and more frequent consultations. More meaningful changes in Turkey's status will require Cypriot approval, and there is a recognition within the EU that pressure will have to be applied on Nicosia to agree. End Summary.

¶2. (C) USEU pol-mil officer met September 29 with Helena Boguslawska of the Directorate for Defense Aspects of ESDP within the European Union Council Secretariat. USEU officer sought details of EU efforts to address Turkish concerns regarding their role in ESDP. Boguslawska listed nine proposals offered by ESDP Director General Robert Cooper to the Turks during a September 18 meeting in Lisbon between a special EU Troika and the Turkish MFA Strategic Director. The proposals called for consultations with Turkey before the launching of any ESDP civilian mission. The EU also committed itself to an ongoing strategic dialogue between the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the three non-EU European ESDP partners, Turkey, Iceland, and Norway. They would be joined by Macedonia and Croatia as EU acceding countries to create a PSC plus 5 format. The EU also proposed crisis management consultations with Turkey early in the internal deliberations process. This would be part of an enhanced overall bilateral relationship on crisis management. Cooper pledged particular attention to close consultations when the EU envisions any actions in proximity to Turkey or in areas of strategic interest to Turkey.

¶3. (C) According to Boguslawska, Cooper also offered closer political dialogue with Ankara. One possibility would be to include the Strategic Director in the EU-Turkey Troika meetings. The EU proposed to convene the Committee of Contributors (of any ESDP mission) at a higher level, and to provide updates from the relevant Operation Commander to the Committee. The EU also reportedly offered to allow a Turkish presence within the EU Operational Headquarters for missions to which Turkey contributes, even though there is no security agreement between Turkey and the EU. Cooper also is reported to have offered Turkey increased involvement in the activities of the EU Institute for Strategic Studies (EUISS).

¶4. (C) Boguslawska said that the Turkish Prime Minister

recently sent letters to many, but not all, member states to complain about the lack of consultations with Turkey on civilian missions being run in proximity to Turkey, notably the EUPOL COPPS mission in Ramallah, the EU Border Assistance and Monitoring mission in Rafah, and the EU JUST THEMIS rule of law mission in Georgia. In general, the EU has felt a greater obligation to consult with Turkey regarding EU military missions, but Cooper told the Turks that there is no opposition to consultations on a case-by-case basis. Cooper pointed out that Turkey needs only to request such consultations, something Ankara so far has not done.

15. (C) The meeting in Lisbon was the more recent of two meetings since June at which the EU proposed these "enhancements" of Ankara's relationship with ESDP. The EU's initial take on the discussions is that Turkey is "not prepared to absorb the proposal," based on continued Turkish blockage of closer NATO cooperation with the EU in Afghanistan. According to Boguslawska, these overtures to Ankara are contingent upon signs of flexibility from Turkey regarding Kosovo and Afghanistan in return. The EU already held one PSC plus 5 meeting on September 5 to discuss a potential mission to Chad. The EU hopes that this meeting will break new ground in relations with Turkey and intends to have at least four such meetings on special topics per year. In addition, the PSC plus 5 received high-level briefings from the Chairman of the EU Military Committee and the Director General of the EU Military Staff on Darfur. The Turkish FM reportedly met with Council HR Solana on September 25 to discuss this list of suggestions.

16. (C) In Boguslawska's view, the EU has seen some positive signals from Ankara, but is concerned that since there has been only interaction with the MFA, and not the MOD, the outcome remains uncertain. The EU hopes that the next time Turkish MOD representatives come to Brussels, they will visit with the EU Council General Secretariat in addition to NATO. Boguslawska said that there is also concern that continued Cypriot refusal to allow Turkey to establish arrangements with the European Defense Agency (EDA) and to conclude a security agreement with the EU (the two things Ankara wants most from the EU at this juncture), the "window of opportunity" may close without concrete movement. Within the Secretariat, there is a hope that French President Sarkozy will weigh in with strong support for positive movement.

17. (C) Comment: Although the pace may be glacial, there have been several indications recently of a possible way forward on the Turkey-EU security relationship. The conversation above, reinforced by others with member state permreps, suggests that the EU has at least begun to address Turkish complaints. Contacts at the local Turkish mission have also told us that EDA and the security agreement remain Ankara's exclusive focus. This message has been received: French deputy PSC ambassador told us last week that the French are thinking seriously about the Turkish problem and understand that a solution will ultimately require pressure on the Cypriots by major member states. The likely solution, he said, was a narrow security-focused agreement that would not compromise the larger Cyprus territorial question. Although he had no illusions about easy Cypriot acquiescence, in the end, he said, Cyprus would not want to become completely isolated. The EU understands that they have to get their own house in order, but they hope that the U.S. will back them in getting Ankara to sign on to a deal. End Comment.

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